





CHAPTER 1

Outdoor Recreation Assessments

The most tedious and technical portion of the SCORP is data analysis and reporting. Without this background, our recommendations would be based solely on opinion and hearsay. Indiana's tradition of listening to both the general and professional population, then finding middle ground has created a solid foundation that allows us to look objectively at the past, compare it to the present and foresee trends. This information allows us to provide solutions and recommendations that are ahead of their time, save taxpayer dollars, and offer facilities and programs that will suit the desires of many for years.

In this chapter we report the facts and our interpretations of them. This is the foundation we use to form our recommendations and plans. This section is the voice of the people, it shows that we listen, both to the general population and

to the professionals, as we mentioned in the introduction.

Assessing the Needs

The Division of Outdoor Recreation (DOR) contracted with reliable data-collection agencies to develop statistically sound, well-written surveys. These surveys are administered throughout the State via touch-screen computers, paper intercept, telephone and mail. This method allows for thousands of respondents to record their activities, preferences, dislikes and hopes for future direction of outdoor recreation. The DOR charts and analyzes the responses, then uses the information to help guide State projects and funding.

The surveys that were used for this SCORP are:

- IDNR Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey (Appendix A)
- Indiana Boater Survey (Appendix B1 and B2)
- Designate Trails Survey (Appendix C)





- Recreation Issues - Professional Survey (Appendix D)
- Professional Trails - Provider Survey (Appendix E)

The following section gives an overview of each survey. Readers may view additional analysis at <http://www.in.gov/dnr/outdoor/planning/index.html>. Later chapters discuss how the results can be used to help local communities, private owners, park boards and park managers make informed decisions about future improvements to their properties and programs. The discussions should also help consumers better understand the issues park personnel and advisory boards face.

Indiana Department of Natural Resources Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey

This is the third time the DOR has used the Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey (Appendix A). Such repetition allows us to demonstrate the validity and reliability of the instrument, and track trends in outdoor recreation participation. Each time, the process has been administered by Survey America of Indiana, Inc. The survey for this SCORP was conducted from May 2003 to February 2004 using both touch-screen computers and paper. Data were collected at Wal-Marts, Kmart, county fairs, libraries in 58 counties, the 2003 State Fair, the 2003 Vincennes Rendezvous and at a Paoli grocery store. A total of 6,686 surveys were completed. People younger than 17 were not actively recruited but were permitted to complete the survey.

Respondent Demographics

The number of respondents proved representative of the State's population, as compared with U.S. Census numbers for Indiana.

- There was a nearly even distribution between genders, 51.2% male to

48.8% female, closer to an even distribution than the 2000 SCORP population.

- The average age was 39.8, just above the 2005 U.S. Census Bureau report of median age for Indiana (36.1).
- 57.9% were married, 26.7% were single, 11.2% were divorced.
- 49% had children younger than 18 living at home. No distinction was made between those married with children and singles with children.
- The racial/ethnic distribution was in line with the U.S. Census Bureau statistics, which are shown in parentheses. White respondents formed 84.8% of the sample (vs. 86.1%), African-American, 8.4% (vs. 8.6%), and Hispanic/Latino, 3.3% (vs. 2.4% "some other race").
- 13.4% reported having a disability that interferes with participating in outdoor recreation (the same percentage as U.S. Census statistics for "persons with disabilities").
- 60.2% of respondents had completed high school, trade/technical school, or up to three years of college (vs. U.S. Census statistics of 85.3% "completed high school", 16.5% completed college (vs. 21.3%), 11.6% completed graduate work (vs. 7.7%).
- The average annual income for 2002 (for those older than 18) was \$49,600. The U.S. Census Bureau median income for families was \$54,077 and \$43,993 for households.
- 29.3% lived in rural areas; 21.1% in communities of 10,000 to 50,000; 15.4%, communities 5,000 to 10,000.
- 92% reported participating in some form of outdoor recreation within the past year.



Activities

The following question was asked to determine the importance of outdoor recreation to Hoosiers. These numbers indicate that outdoor recreation is important to 93.1% of the people, which is backed by 92% saying they were involved in an outdoor recreational activity during the previous year.

"How important is outdoor recreation to you?"

Essential – 54.1%
Desirable – 39.1%
Don't care – 5.7%
Undesirable – 1.1%

Fig. 1 shows a breakdown of the activities in which respondents participated regularly during the previous year.

Walking/hiking/jogging was ranked as the No. 1 activity in which respondents participated (84.9%). The significant spread between walking and the second most popular activity, fairs and festivals, indicates the tremendous need for trails and other linear activity opportunities. To follow the universal design concept, we must provide trails that accommodate people of various abilities. For more information about trail planning, go to <http://www.in.gov/dnr/outdoor/>.

Fairs and festivals were participated in by 68.4% of the sample, followed by swimming/SCUBA/snorkeling (60.7%), nature observation/photography

(59.8%), camping (53.5%), and fishing (52.3%). Note that, for the most part, these activities do not require expensive specialized equipment, recurring costs for equipment or specialized training. Additionally, they can provide excellent social interaction. Their popularity could be a natural response to the decrease in the degree of neighborhood interaction that was the norm for our forefathers.

Many recreation categories were broken down further for greater clarification. A brief synopsis follows. For a complete report, go to <http://www.in.gov/dnr/outdoor/planning/index.html>.

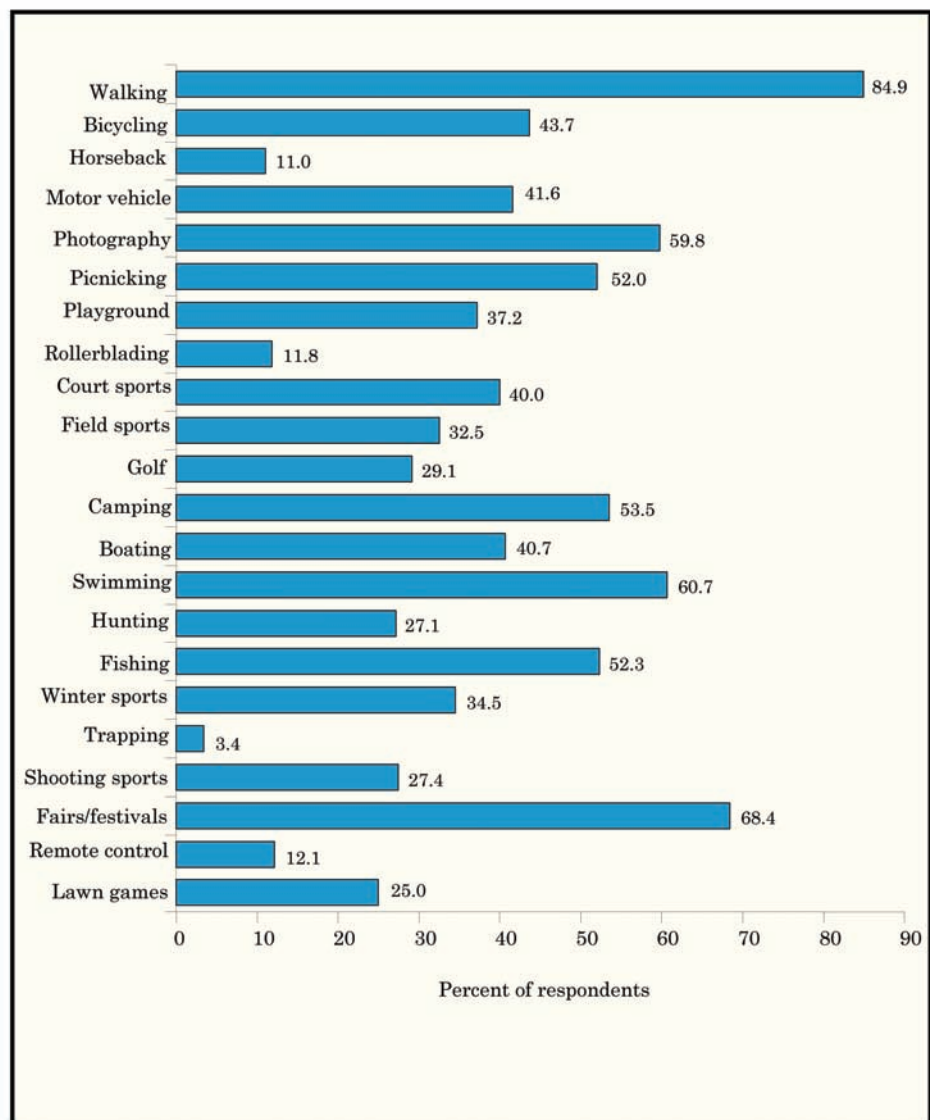


Figure 1. Participation percentages by activity (Survey America, 2005)



Walking/hiking/jogging – 84.9%
 Walking for pleasure – 77.8%,
 Hiking – 39.2%
 Fitness – 28.4%
 Jogging – 18.7%

Fairs and festivals - 68.4%

Swimming/SCUBA/snorkeling - 60.7%
 Pool swimming – 81.0%
 Lake swimming – 62.0 %
 SCUBA – 9.9%

Nature observation/photography - 59.8%
 Wildlife viewing – 55.1%
 Fall foliage – 53.2%
 Relaxation – 46.7%

Camping – 53.5%
 Tent – 63.2%
 RV/trailer – 33.5%
 Cabins – 26%

Note: The 2004 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment reported “developed camping,” 26.8%, and “primitive camping,” 16.4%. This apparent discrepancy could be due to several factors including, but not limited to, variation in survey methodology, different sample populations, or different wording of questions.

Fishing – 52.3%
 Lake/reservoir – 65.1%
 Ponds – 63.5%
 Bank fishing – 52.5%

Picnicking – 52.0%

Bicycling – 43.7%
 Casual – 72.9%
 Rail-trail – 17.1%
 Other – 15.8%
 Mountain – 15.1%

Motorized vehicle use – 41.6%
 Pleasure – 43.9%
 ATVs – 41.8%
 Four-wheel drive – 41.1%
 Motorcycles – 28.2%

Boating/water skiing/personal watercraft – 40.7%
 Power boating – 46.2%
 Canoe – 40.6%
 Water skiing – 36.4%

Court sports – 40.0%
 Basketball – 59.6%
 Volleyball – 35.8%
 Horseshoes – 30.4%

Playground use – 37.2%

Winter sports – 34.5%
 Sledding – 67.4%
 Ice skating – 24.4%
 Snowmobiling – 24.2%

Field sports – 32.5%
 Baseball – 66.4%
 Football – 35.6%
 Soccer – 24.9%

Golf – 29.1%
 Regulation – 52.2%
 Miniature – 48.8%
 Driving range – 36.7%

Shooting sports – 27.4%
 Rifles – 61.1%
 Handguns – 54.8%
 Clay targets – 42.1%

Hunting – 27.1%
 Deer – 72.3%
 Small game – 56.6%
 Furbearers– 29.7%

Lawn games – 25.0%

Remote control – 12.1%

Roller blading/roller skating/skateboarding – 11.8%

Horseback riding – 11.0%

Trapping – 3.4%



All of these activities may not be pertinent to every facility or community in the State but this is a good representation of the most popular. Such information could provide a feasible guideline for outdoor recreation planners when they assess the needs and desires of the population for which they work.

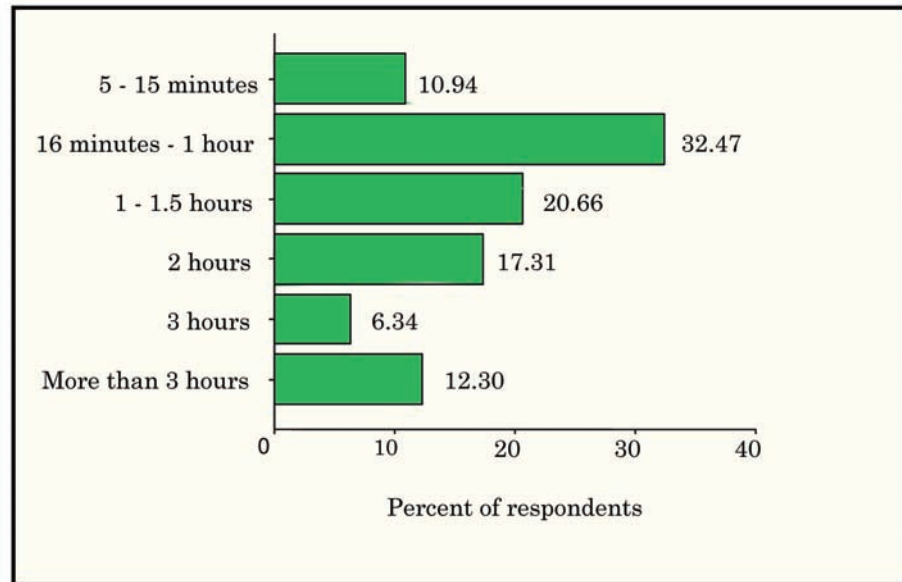


Figure 2. Time willing to travel to new or improved recreation facilities

Locations

The participation survey also assessed the locations most frequently used for outdoor recreation. The top five counties in which respondents were active were

- Lake – 5.5%
- Brown – 5.1%
- Monroe – 4.4%
- Vigo – 4.1%
- Allen – 4.0%

Note: These percentages do not correlate with the percentage of respondents who reside in those counties. For example, the number of respondents who reside in Allen County made up 5.0% of the total respondent population.

Note: 8.7% of the respondents did not participate in the recorded activities in Indiana. In other words, a small percent of Hoosiers reported being active in places outside of Indiana. No indications as to why they went elsewhere were recorded.

The highest percentage of respondents was active on privately owned properties (29.0%). State-owned properties were the second most frequently used type (22.9%). City/town properties ranked third (11.2%). The response to “Who do you think should provide facilities for ... activity?” contrasted with where people

actually are being active. Respondents said these sectors should be the facility providers (multiple responses allowed):

- State – 60.5%
- County – 43.9%
- City/town – 39.9%
- Federal – 39.0%

Time

Although 52.2% reported “lack of time” as their main reason for not participating in outdoor activities more often, the highest percentage (32.5%) reported being willing to travel 16 to 60 minutes to new or improved outdoor recreation facilities. This was followed by 20.7% who were willing to travel 60 to 90 minutes and 17.3% willing to travel two hours. Interestingly, 6.3% were willing to travel three hours versus 12.3% willing to travel more than three hours (see Fig. 2). This may indicate two different viewpoints, one group perceiving outdoor recreation as a partial-day activity (e.g., a 30-minute bike ride) and another group seeing it as an all-day pursuit (e.g., hunting).

No information was collected concerning the current amount of time respondents

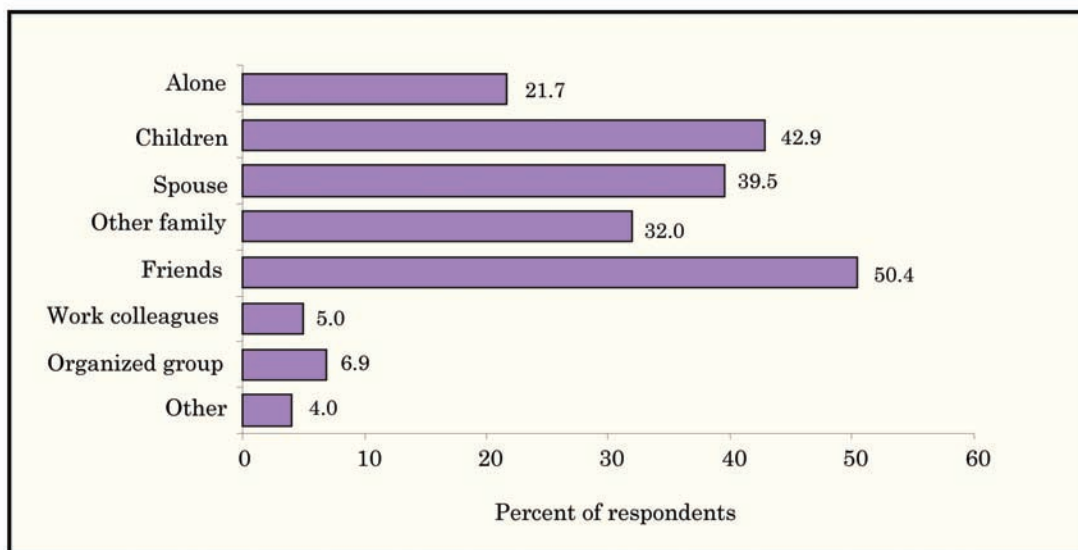


Figure 3. Who participated in activities with respondent

travel to participate in outdoor recreation.

Funding

Respondents said that funding for improvements to current outdoor recreation facilities and developing new facilities should come from sources other than State taxes (income or sales). Respondents listed lottery/gaming as the top source the government should use to raise more money to develop and improve outdoor recreation facilities. Special-use taxes rated second. Additional federal funds rated third.

Conclusions

This Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey is a valid indicator that outdoor recreation is important to many Hoosiers. In general, the most popular activities cost little and provide social opportunities (see Fig. 3) for the participants. Although most of the reported activities take place on private land, the majority of respondents say public lands should be the predominant locations for outdoor recreation opportunities, and (even though pressed for time) they were willing to travel to those properties. Respondents oppose additional State taxes being used to fund new proj-

ects. A significant number say revenue from lotteries/gaming should be used for outdoor recreation.

Indiana Boater Survey

The Indiana Boater Survey is an addition to the SCORP. Actually it is a boater study because it includes two surveys and three focus groups. Two separate statewide telephone surveys were conducted in January and February 2004, one for the general population, one for registered boaters. The focus groups were conducted in Michigan City, Evansville and Indianapolis in June 2004 as a follow-up to the telephone surveys. A total of 2,008 surveys were completed, 1,007 general population (including 300 registered boaters) and 1,001 registered boaters. Focus group participants were 50 registered boaters and canoeists who responded to the original surveys.

Respondent Demographics

The demographics between the general population and registered boaters varied slightly. Both are reported here for comparison. GPB equals "general population boaters" and RB equals "registered boaters".



- 42% GPB lived in small cities/towns, 18% lived in non-farm rural areas; 35% RB lived in small cities/towns, 25% lived in non-farm rural areas.
- The average length of residency in Indiana for GPB was 39.1 years; RB averaged 41.4 years.
- 61% GPB were married vs. 79% RB.
- 23% GPB were retired vs. 21% RB.
- 38% GPB graduated from high school, 23% had some college/school, 20% were college graduates; 42% RB graduated from high school, 22% had some college, 19% were college graduates.
- 85% GPB were White, 5% were African-American, 1% were Hispanic; 91% RB were White, 1% were African American, and 0% were Hispanic.
- 21% GPB were age 45-54, 20% were 60-plus, and 19% were 35-44; 28% RB were age 45-54, 14% were 60-plus, 23% were 35-44. Additionally, 20% RB were 55-64.
- 47% GPB were male, 53% female; 89% RB were male, 11% female.

Average income is not reported because of the respondents' high refusal rate.

Note the difference in professions of GPB and RB. Although "retired" was the No. 1

category selected for both surveys, 7% GPB selected "construction/development" and 9% selected "industry," compared to 16% RB in "construction/development" and 16% in "industry." This may be a direct relation with the difference between the GPB and RB surveys in percentages of male and female respondents.

There was also a slight difference in the geographical location of the respondents. The top five counties that were represented in the general population survey were Marion, Lake, Allen, Elkhart and Porter. The top five in the registered boaters survey were Lake, Marion, Allen, Washington and Kosciusko.

Activities

It makes sense that 85% RB reported that outdoor recreation is "very important" to them and 13% rated outdoor recreation as "somewhat important." In comparison, 55% GPB responded that outdoor recreation was "very important" and 32% rated it as "somewhat important." When the two groups are combined, the percentage of respondents saying that outdoor recreation was "important" (92%) equals the number of respondents from the Outdoor Recreation

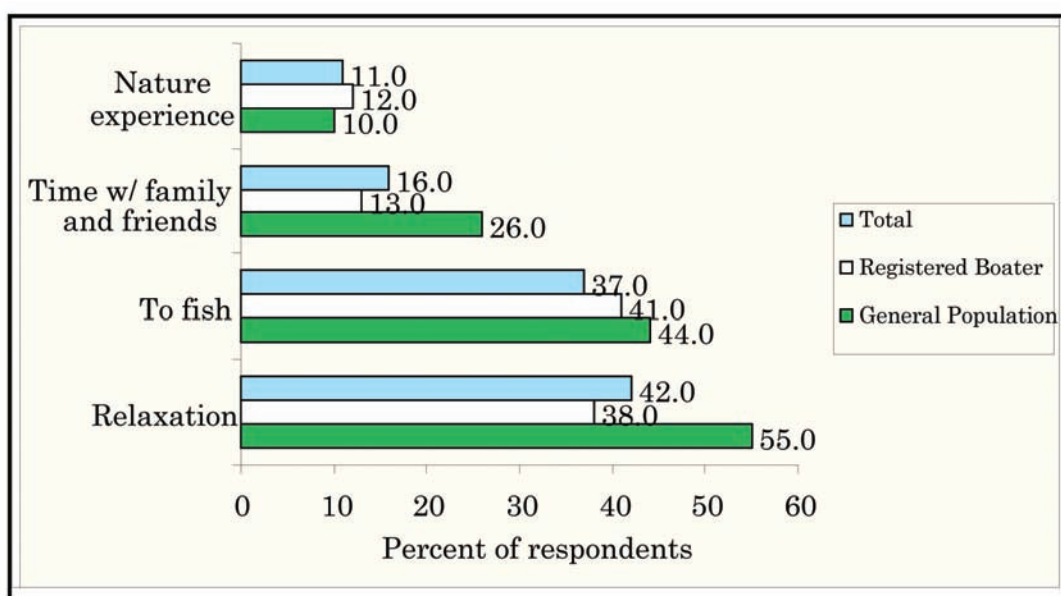


Figure 4. Important reasons respondents boat



Participation Survey.

The No. 1 reason all respondents said they boated was relaxation (42%), followed by fishing (37%), being with family and friends (16%), and being close to nature (11%). Fig. 4 shows the variation between GPB and RB responses to "What are the important reasons why you boat in Indiana?"

The responses to the surveys show that motorboating is the most popular type of boating. Motorboats were divided into two categories, 16-26 feet long and less than 16 feet. Forty-one percent of boaters from both surveys used a boat that was 16-26 feet long. Seventeen percent GPB and 18% RB used motorboats less than 16 feet long. Another consistency was the use of pontoon boats, with 16% GPB and 15% RB using them. One difference between populations was canoe use. Sixteen percent GPB used canoes, 0% RB.

Locations

Most boaters wanted to be close to the water they use. Few respondents wanted to travel more than two hours to boat. GPB were more willing to travel for a longer time to reach their destination, with 47% saying less than one hour, followed by 40%, one to two hours. RB wanted to travel the least amount of time: 59% less than one hour, 29% one to two hours. No respondents wanted to travel more than four hours. This information could correlate to most GPBs saying they either owned the watercraft used or that it was owned by a friend/acquaintance. Although no data were collected concerning distance from residence to closest body of water used, it may be possible that respondents were boaters because of their proximity to a boating location. Few respondents rented watercraft.

Body of Water	General Population	Number of Boat Trips by GPB*	Registered Boaters	Number of Boat Trips by RB**
Brookville Reservoir	■	172	■	499
Clear Lake			■	394
Glendale Marsh	■	117		
Lake Freeman	■	96		
Lake James			■	479
Lake Michigan	■	214	■	604
Lake Wawasee	■	129	■	653
Long Lake			■	367
Monroe Reservoir	■	238	■	836
Morse Reservoir			■	523
Patoka Reservoir	■	104	■	996
Pine Lake	■	107		
Salamonie Reservoir			■	387
Tippecanoe Lake	■	86		
Waubee Lake	■	162		

Table 1. Comparison of 15 most commonly used bodies of water by user population

* General Population Boater, ** Registered Boater

Notes:

- 1) A much higher percentage GPB used non-motorized boats that do not need to be registered (e.g., canoes, kayaks) and can be used in smaller bodies of water.
- 2) Several of the bodies of water are surrounded by privately owned land.
- 3) The chart indicates that GPB may be less likely to use DNR-owned/operated properties than RB.



The top 10 bodies of water used by GPB were:

- Monroe Reservoir
- Lake Michigan
- Brookville Reservoir
- Waubee Lake
- Lake Wawasee
- Glendale Marsh
- Pine Lake
- Patoka Reservoir
- Lake Freeman
- Tippecanoe Lake

The top 10 bodies of water used by RB were:

- Patoka Reservoir
- Monroe Reservoir
- Lake Wawasee
- Lake Michigan
- Morse Reservoir
- Brookville Reservoir
- Lake James
- Clear Lake
- Salamonie Reservoir
- Long Lake

Note the small degree of overlap between the bodies of water used by GPB and RB. See Table 1.

Time

The average number of days GPB spent boating in the 12 months before completing the survey was 21.5 days. Although the average number of days spent on the water by RB was somewhat higher (30.9 days) the former is still a significant amount of time. Most boaters spent from one to nine days on the water with RB having a slightly higher average number of hours (5.0 hours vs. 5.5).

A small percentage (4%) reported that they did not take day boating trips. This could indicate that these people only boat when they go for a weekend, mini- or full vacation.

The amount of boating activity of more than half of all respondents (59%) re-



mained the same through the past 12 months. Asked "What are the reasons you do not go boating more often?" 79% reported "lack of time." This response rate is even higher than participation survey responses to the same question. This may indicate that boating activities can require more time in general because of factors such as transporting a boat and finding adequate water access.

Although boaters reported "family obligations" as the second reason for lack of time for more boating, the main boating companions of GPB were spouse (50%) friends (50%) and/or children (40%). The main RB boating companions were spouse (52%), and/or children (48%) and friends (42%). The average number of companions on GPB boating outings was 4.2 people. For RB, it was 2.6 people. Typically, a GPB reported taking two people; RB reported taking one. Three percent of the total population reported that they did not take anyone with them. These data indicate that boating is a social activity for most boaters.

Funding

The survey responses indicate that boating is a fairly inexpensive activity



(excluding equipment purchases such as boat or trailer) on a trip-by-trip basis. GPB averaged spending \$126 per person per trip for their vehicle, travel, lodging, food and drink (alcoholic and non-alcoholic). Thirty percent GPB spent \$100 or more, 13% spent \$50-\$59, 12% spent \$20-\$29, and 18% spent \$0. The average amount spent by RB for the same items was \$44 per person per trip. Twenty-one percent spent \$100 or more, 9% spent \$50-\$59, 13% spent \$20-\$29, and 24% spent \$0. Forty-two percent GPB did not spend money on boat expenditures (e.g., fuel, equipment) and 24% spent less than \$30. Thirty-two percent RB did not spend money on boat expenditures, and 36% spent less than \$30. These data indicate that boaters prepared for

their trips before leaving home and carried much of their food and drink with them. Additionally, most boaters prefer to start their boating in the morning, so being prepared in advance would allow for an early start.

Additional observations – Satisfaction and safety

Most said they are satisfied with the waterways, boating-access points, general boating safety, and the presence of conservation officers on the water. More than one-third said that the same amount of money should be spent on access points and ramps; approximately half said more should be spent. Of those who felt more should be spent, the high-

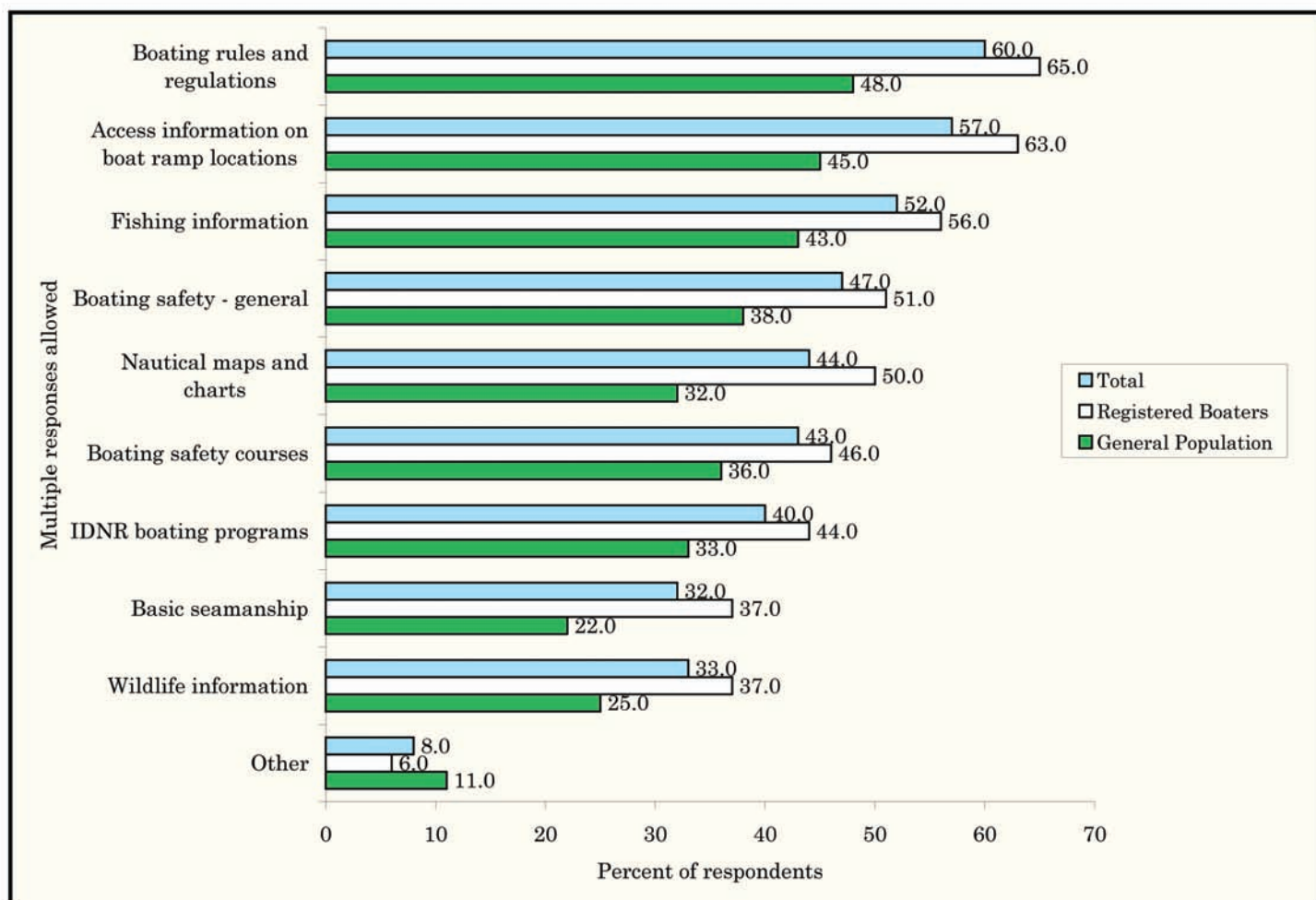


Figure 5. Topics boaters would like to receive information about



est percentage (31%) said more should go toward building more boat ramps.

Respondents said that, for the most part, Indiana waterways were safe; however, areas that they expressed concerns about included boater and personal-watercraft-user recklessness, and alcohol use. Most boaters indicated that conservation officers should spend much more effort controlling reckless operation and alcohol use; however, they did not indicate a need for officers to spend more time on the waterways. Boaters also approved of mandatory safety classes, especially for operators 15 and older who do not have a valid driver's license. More than 50% indicated that more should be spent on boater education classes.

Conclusions

When one considers that boating is typically a three-season activity, it is evident

that boating is important in the world of outdoor recreation. Estimated 2004 boating expenditures in Indiana were \$650 million, an admirable contribution to the economy. Boats used range from motor-boats to sailboats to kayaks. The overall impression is that boaters are satisfied with the facilities and IDNR. Typically, boating is a low-cost social adventure with family and friends that respondents would do more of if they could. Boaters are well aware of the hazards of reckless operation and alcohol, and would like to see better law enforcement control of offenders. One last item worth noting is that 56% RB wanted to receive more information (preferably by direct mail), such as shown in Fig. 5.

2004 Designate Trails Survey (Trail-User Survey)

The 2004 Designate Trails Survey (hereafter called the trail-user survey) was conducted June through November 2004 by Survey America. The 34-question survey was administered via touch-screen survey centers in Kmart's and libraries in 14 counties and at the 2004 State Fair. A total of 1,008 surveys were completed.

Demographics

The trail-user survey responses had a nearly even geographic distribution. The percentage of total responses from each region of Indiana was within 0.4% (range 16.5 to 16.9%). The respondent demographics are also representative of Indiana's population as compared to the U.S. Census statistics (see "Participation survey—Demographics" for comparisons).

- Genders were nearly evenly represented: male, 47%, female, 53%.
- Average age was 42.1.
- Racial/ethnic distribution was White, 82.0%; African-American, 9.9%; and Hispanic/Latino, 2.7%.



- Education-level distribution was graduated high school/some college, 54.0%; college graduate, 20.2%; graduate work, 16.9%.
- Average household income of those older than 18 was \$49,457.
- The majority of respondents lived in a community of 10,000 to 49,999 people, 29.4%; 50,000 to 149,999, 22.6%; 5,000 to 9,999, 17.0%.

Activities

More than 57 percent (57.8%) had used a designated recreational trail within the past 12 months, 37.8% had not, and 4.4% were not sure. Although it may seem unlikely for people to be unsure whether they had used a recreational trail, consider the many interpretations of the term. Some define a trail as a dirt path through the woods. Others would say that a trail is a waterway, a bike lane along a busy street, or a paved, ADA-accessible multi-use pathway through a closed community. Each can be a designated trail, but the users may not be aware of that designation, particularly if they enter and exit at unmarked locations.

Once again, the highest percentage of respondents used trails for walking/running (72.7%), followed by hiking/backpacking (33.3%), and touring bicycling (19.8%). A significant portion (18.3%) used trails for motorized vehicles (snowmobiles, off-road four-wheel drive vehicles, off-road motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles). Canoeing/kayaking (14.1%) and horseback riding (11.5%) were other important trail activities. For a further breakdown of trails activities go to <http://www.in.gov/dnr/outdoor/>, The Indiana State Trails, Greenways, and Bikeways Plan.

The top four reasons Hoosiers used trails were:

- 1) Pleasure/relaxation/recreation
- 2) Health/physical training
- 3) Social interaction/family outing
- 4) Scenery/natural environment



Note that the top three reasons for trails use are related to physical and psychological well-being (i.e., health: stress reduction/relaxation, physical well-being, and social interaction).

The survey also assessed trails issues that do not necessarily relate to current trails use. All of the following trails issues were rated as "somewhat important" to "very important" by more than 50% of the respondents:

- Developing trails close to home – 63.6%
- Publishing trail map guides – 61.8%
- Linking existing trails – 59.1%
- Building more trails – 57.6%
- Improving trails for the disabled – 55.2%
- Developing bike-commuting trails – 54.4%
- Acquiring more land for trails – 53.8%
- Designating roads as bike routes – 53.6%
- Designating a funding source – 51.2%
- Building long-distance trails – 50.9%

Note that 55.2% said improving trails for the disabled was important, while fewer (37.7%) said paving a trail with



asphalt was important. Granted, persons with disabilities or limitations do not necessarily need paved surfaces but many people associate the two. This apparent contradiction may be another example of the perception of what constitutes a "trail" being more limited than the definition of "trail."

One question that received a lower percentage (22.7%) for "somewhat" to "very" important was "... developing trails for motorized use." This may reflect that these trails are typically specialized and the "limited" population who uses them, especially considering that motorized-vehicle use ranked ninth in the participation survey results.

Locations

The survey did not ask for specific locations of current trails use.

A complete list of trails can be found at <http://www.in.gov/dnr/outdoor/trails/index.htm> and plans for future trail devel-

opment can be found in The Indiana State Trails, Greenways, and Bikeways Plan.

Time

Most respondents (62.2%) reported using designated trails once a week or less, 10.9% used trails two to four times a week, followed by 2.0% who said they used trails five to seven times a week. Asked "What are the primary reasons you don't use recreational trails more often?" 64.4% said "not enough time," 27.0% said "trails too far away," and 24.5% didn't know where trails were located.

Although many respondents used trails once a week or less, there was high interest in participating in trails activities. Below are specific activities and the percentage of respondents interested.

- Walking a public trail in their city – 61.3%
- Day hikes in the wilderness – 50.9%
- Bicycling in their city – 46.5%
- Canoeing – 45.3%
- Horseback riding – 35.1%





- Bicycling outside of the city – 32%
- Running/jogging – 28.5%
- Overnight backpack hiking – 28.2%
- Off-road four-wheel drive riding – 23.4%
- All-terrain vehicle riding – 21.1%
- Snowmobiling – 19.0%
- Cross-country skiing – 16.8%
- In-line skating – 16.4%
- Off-road motorcycling – 14.4%

These results may indicate that respondents would use trails more often if they had enough time. Trails that are close to home that connect people to destinations and/or provide a circular route with opportunities to experience a natural environment may be the appropriate solution. It may also be true that trails built within a community would be of greatest economic benefit to both user and provider.

Funding

Survey respondents said that general taxes should be the primary source of trails funding (27.5%) followed by donations (27.1%). Asked “If the money was spent in your local area ... would you be willing to pay an annual fee to use ... trails?” 37.1% of respondents said “yes,” 37.1% “maybe.” Of those respondents, 28.7% said they would pay \$5 to \$9.99; 21.2% would pay less than \$5; and 20.1% would pay \$10 to \$15.

The general population may not be aware of the grants available for trails development. For more information, go to <http://www.in.gov/dnr/outdoor/>.

Conclusions

The use of trails is an important aspect of outdoor recreation. Many people may not understand the diversity of trails or the many different components that can be integrated into a trail system (e.g., street, waterway, natural cover); however, people use trails regularly and see a need for new trail development. Some of the greatest need includes bringing trails closer to communities, linking ex-

isting trails, and connecting communities to destinations (e.g., landmarks, parks, schools or businesses). Although the survey did not assess the economic impact of trails, one could extrapolate that the improved health (mental, physical and social) gained by trail use will benefit both the individual and the economy through reduced health costs and, potentially, reductions in chronic illness. Park use may increase if linked with nearby communities by way of multi-use trails. Conversely, community businesses may see an increase in revenues from park visitors. Additionally, trails built with universal design and diverse populations in mind could allow people with limitations or disabilities to experience their community in a new, meaningful way.

The priority population for the preceding surveys was users. The purpose was to determine the outdoor recreation activities that citizens were involved in and what they would like to do in the future. The next two surveys (Recreation Issues Survey and Trails-Provider Survey) focused on providers and their perspectives, issues, goals and limitations.

Recreation Issues - Provider Survey

The recreation-provider survey development and implementation was a three part process. During 2002 and 2003, we analyzed 55 five-year master plans and interviewed four park and recreation superintendents. The results from the analyses and interviews were compiled to create an issues survey including both open-ended and specific list-response questions. The survey was mailed to 484 park and recreation leaders. “Leaders” were defined as “park board members and park superintendents or employees” (Ball State University, 2004). Questionnaires were mailed in November 2003. A total of 182 were completed and returned by Jan. 31, 2004, then used for this study.



Group and number of respondents	Yes, frequently (%)	Occasionally (%)	No, not at all (%)
Clubs and organizations, e.g., little league (N = 173)	59.0	34.7	6.4
Local schools (N = 177)	46.9	43.5	9.6
Volunteer groups (N = 171)	41.5	54.4	4.1
Civic organizations (N = 169)	33.1	60.9	5.9
Other units of government (N = 168)	28.0	47.6	24.4
Special interest groups (N = 167)	19.2	52.7	28.1
Non-profit recreation providers, e.g., YMCA (N = 165)	19.4	43.0	37.6
Private industry (N = 167)	10.2	56.9	32.9
Convention and Visitors Bureaus (N = 166)	17.5	39.8	42.8
Neighborhood associations (N = 159)	10.1	37.1	52.8
Health care providers (N = 164)	6.1	43.9	50.0
Commercial recreation providers (N = 164)	5.5	40.9	53.7

Table 2. Frequency of parks partnering with other stakeholders to provide outdoor recreation opportunities by percentage

Demographics

- The highest percentage of respondents (44.5%) were municipal park and recreation department employees, followed by members of park boards (32.4%), and employees of county park and recreation departments (10.4%).
- The highest percentage of communities represented had both a park board and a park and recreation department (60%), park boards only (30%), park and recreation department only (5%).
- Communities with populations of 10,000 to 49,999 had the highest response rate (39.6%), followed by 4,999 or less (25.3%), 5,000 to 9,999 (14.8%).
- 68% of the respondents were male; 32% were female.
- The highest percentage of years of park experience was six to 10 years (30.0%), one to five years (25.9%), 21 years or more (19.4%).
- The average years of experience for board members was 8.9; the figure for park department employees was 14.8 years.

Major issues identified with open-ended questions

Budgeting and funding was one of the most important issues reported in master plans, interviews and survey results. This topic included not only budgeting and funding for new development,



but also funding for maintenance and upgrading of facilities. Although some grants are available for land acquisition, those funds do not provide for the future upkeep of those facilities. Budget constraints and finding effective means to deal with them has been a challenge for several years. Park superintendents and boards must use effective long- and short-range planning to address the needs of today and the future, not only to satisfy the end user, but also to ensure that the facilities last. Some of the ways that park leaders are currently dealing with this issue are:

- Using marketing strategies to more effectively position the park within the community mindset
- Increasing awareness of the programs and services offered
- Partnering with other stakeholders to share land, facilities and programming
- Soliciting donations
- Developing short-term goals for facility maintenance and renovation
- Developing long-term goals for capital projects and land acquisition

Table 2 highlights some of the stakeholders with whom parks partner for the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities.

Land acquisition and new park development was another important issue in the master plans and surveys. Indiana ranks 15th in the nation for population size. The population grew by 191,488 between 2000 and 2005 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). In contrast, the amount of public land available for recreational purposes remains close to 4% of Indiana's total land. Park leaders expressed concern that land acquisition is not keeping pace with population growth. Additional concerns included:

- Available space
- Land for purchase
- New areas for future parks
- Location of future parks, especially in regard to new residential areas
- Trail development



Some areas have concerns due to tourism impacts on facilities without the benefit of tax-generated funds for new park development. Land acquisition and new park development is especially important in counties defined as "critical". Critical counties have a deficit in total acreage available for outdoor recreation as compared to the NRPA/Indiana total recreational land standard (see chapter three) of 55 acres per 1,000 people and having a population growth higher than the State average.

Obviously, funding for land acquisition and new park development is important. Finding funding sources or different ways to increase facilities may require innovative thinking from park leaders. Some methods that park leaders currently use to increase available lands are donations, purchases and partnerships with local school corporations.



Issues	Ranking	
	Employee	Board
Budgets/funding	1	1
Land acquisition	2	2
Personnel	3	6
Maintenance/facility renovation	4	3
Community/economic growth	5	8
Capital projects	6	5
Meeting community needs	7	7
Political support	8	4

Table 3. Comparison of major issues identified by open-ended questions

Personnel/staffing was a third issue identified by the survey. Two basic sub-categories were identified: 1) budgeting for personnel and 2) quality/type of personnel.

When discussing budgeting for personnel, park leaders listed (1) budget constraints limiting employee numbers, and (2) money available for capital projects but not for personnel to staff them, as the main challenges.

The main comments about quality/type of personnel were (1) quality of seasonal staff, (2) needing to do more with less staff, (3) aging employees, and (4) the need to train new, younger staff members.

Some park leaders indicated money is available for facility maintenance but not for programming. If a park had money available for programming, then budgets were cut, decreasing or eliminating programming was among the first methods used to reduce costs. Unfortunately, this approach could also decrease public awareness of the facility and reduce revenues.

Facility maintenance and renovation was identified as a challenge for park leaders. Once again budget and financial constraints affected the ability of the managers to perform necessary repairs and upkeep. Parking lots, restrooms and shelter houses were a few of the facilities reported to suffer when budgets tighten. Not only are these facilities essential for park users, if left in disarray, they will

detract from community appeal, which could ultimately decrease vital patronage.

Survey responses show that park leaders are more interested in taking care of what they have than in capital projects. One park sold facilities because of a lack of maintenance funding. There can be a balance between maintaining the old and building the new; however, the common response when budget constraints are in place is the scales tip toward taking care

of the present facilities.

Capital projects are an important issue. Even when budgets are low, park leaders realize they must consider the needs of the community and how its demographics are changing. Parks must plan ahead as to how often they should pursue capital projects, if they should pursue them, and whether the projects should be traditional or non-traditional efforts. The SCORP can be an indicator of the trends in Indiana that point the direction for capital projects, but local park managers and park boards need to watch and talk to the people in their community to make informed, sound decisions.

The responses to the open-ended questions indicate some differences between views of park employees and park boards. Table 3 shows a comparison of how park employees ranked major issues versus how park board members prioritized them. Readers should not generalize the results because of the small sample size (park employees, N=103; park board, N=62).

Major issues identified from a specific list

The survey included a specific list of issues (generated by the 2006-10 SCORP Planning Advisory Committee); respondents were asked to select the top three



issues they face. This was a check and balance for the open-ended questions. This portion also included issues not mentioned in the open-ended question responses, which helped to identify the importance of those at the local level.

The issues identified from the list (ranked in order from highest to lowest importance) were

- Staffing
- Competition from other recreation providers
- Level of public participation
- Number of programs offered
- Amount of facilities available
- Communication issues
- ADA compliance
- Safety
- Perceived value of parks and recreation
- Land for recreation
- Staff training and development

Note: several of the last five issues received much lower scores than the first six. Additionally, the last five issues can be more closely related to budgeting or financial constraints, whereas the first six issues can be more closely associated with daily park management and public awareness.

Even though financial difficulties are a reality in outdoor recreation, providers

Capital Projects	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents
Playgrounds	105	58
Multi-use trail	98	54
Land acquisition	93	51
Parking lot	90	50
Other buildings (restrooms, concession stand, nature center)	89	49
Garden or picnic area	74	44
Shelter house	77	43
Soccer field/athletics field	63	35
Nature/interpretive trail	59	33
Lighting system	56	31
Skatepark	55	30

Table 4. Capital projects planned in the next five years (N = 182)

Renovation Projects	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents
Playgrounds	90	50
Parking lots	87	48
Other buildings (restrooms, concession stand, nature center)	73	40
Shelter houses	67	37
Tennis courts	64	35
Baseball diamonds	62	34
Swimming pool	48	27
Basketball/volleyball courts	56	31
Lighting system	47	26
Picnic areas/gardens	40	22

Table 5. Facility renovation projects planned in the next five years (N = 182)

are planning ahead for the benefit of their communities. Providers have five-year plans in place for capital projects and facility renovations. Tables 4 and 5 list the projects being planned for the future.

Although parks have not traditionally prioritized specific populations when planning improvements or new develop-

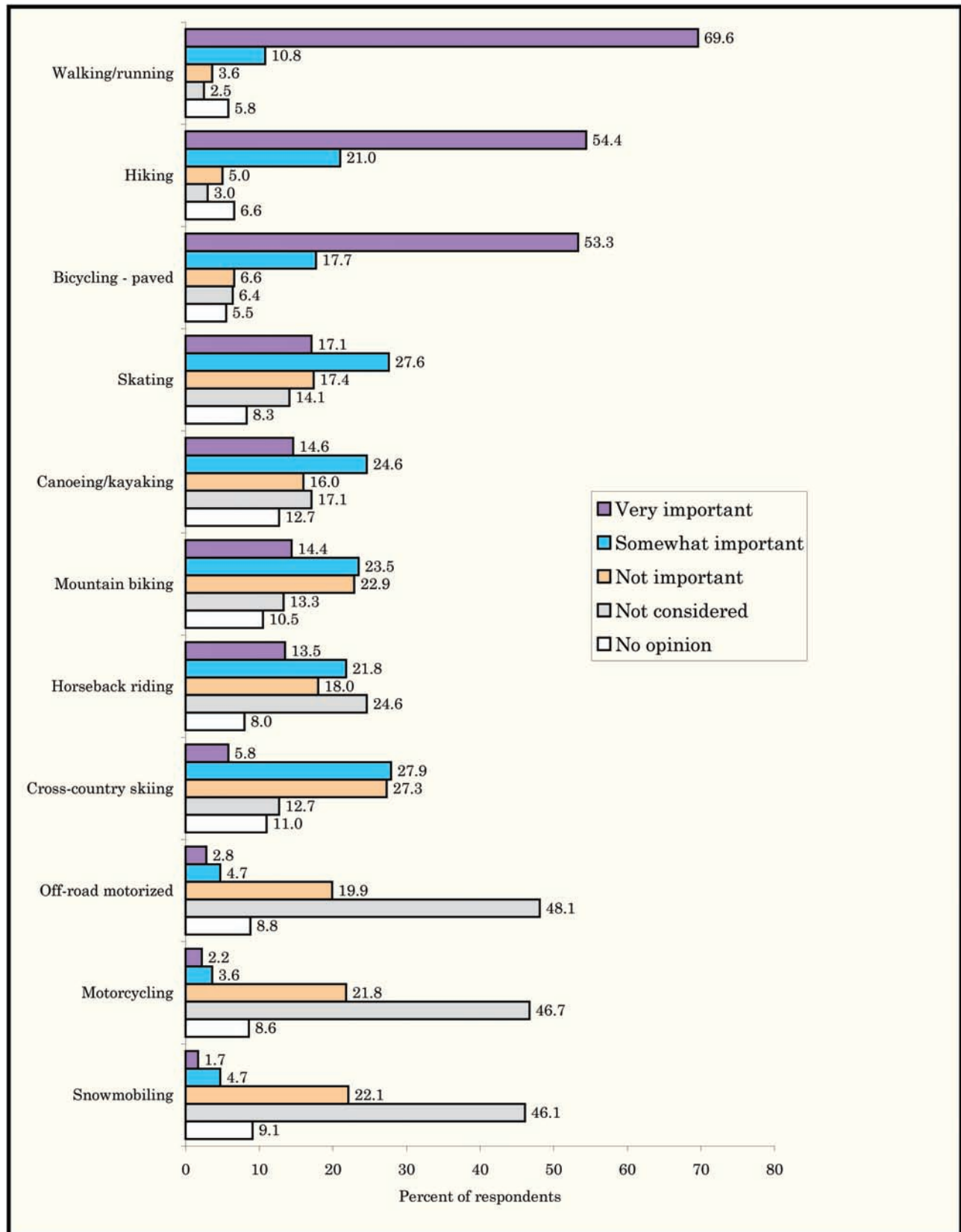


Figure 6. Organizations' degree of importance placed on trail-use opportunities



ment/facilities, a focus on universal design and meeting ADA specifications has brought this concept to the forefront in the mind of some decision makers. This survey included a question about targeted audiences to determine if park leaders consider population-specific improvements. The results are listed by rank:

- Youth/children
- All citizens/we do not target
- Senior citizens
- Families
- Persons with disabilities
- All age groups
- Teens
- Racial/ethnic groups
- Socioeconomic groups
- Walkers/hikers
- Adults

Conclusions

Park and recreation leaders concur on most issues addressed. They consider facility maintenance and new development to be challenges when faced with constricted budgets; however, they are willing to seek and implement new methods of funding, partnerships with other organizations and innovative marketing strategies. The majority of respondents value maintaining and upgrading current facilities more than capital projects when funds are tight. They are willing to cut costs through decreasing capital projects, hiring fewer staff members or dismissing them, and eliminating or decreasing available programs.

Most park leaders consider youth and seniors to be their primary audiences when they address specific groups; although many do not consider priority populations when planning. Even though considering a primary audience is not the norm, it may be prudent for decision makers to do so when planning capital projects. One of the many reasons is the ADA requirements that must be met to receive grant funding. Additionally, by considering universal design and imple-



menting it when possible, providers will automatically cover a broad population. Conversely, planners may need to identify the needs of a specific group as community demographics change and to satisfy those needs for community awareness and acceptance.

Professional Trails-Provider Survey

The Professional Trails-Provider Survey/Trails Management Issues Survey (hereafter called Trails-Provider Survey) was conducted in 2004. It was developed after reviewing 150 random current park and recreation master plans and designed to address the needs and issues associated with trail development, use and maintenance. The survey included open-ended and specific list-response questions, and a comment section. A total of 362 completed surveys were returned and analyzed.



Demographics

- The highest percentage of communities represented had a population of 10,000 to 49,999 (32.9%), followed by 50,000 to 149,999 (17.1%), 4,999 or less (7.7%)
- "Organizations" with the highest representation were cities (27.3%), not-for-profits (22.7%), State (19.1%).
- Annual operating budget used for trails was 0 to 5% of budget (63.0%), 6 to 10% (10.2%), greater than 50% (5.5%).

Importance

Fig. 6 represents how respondents rated the level of importance of various trail opportunities in their community. Organizations viewed linear trails for non-motorized use as the highest priority. Sev-

eral reasons for this include but are not limited to consumer demand, less specialization, environmental impact of motorized vehicles, primary use of properties and maintenance cost.

Trails professionals agreed about many trails issues. The majority agreed or strongly agreed on the following:

- Road improvements should include trail expansion (89.5%).
- Trails should be an important part of community infrastructure (88.4%).
- Adjacent landowners/businesses need to be involved in trail planning/maintenance (85.3%).
- Standardized trail signs and symbols should be used throughout Indiana (83.4%).
- State legislation should support railroad corridor acquisition for trails development (81.5%).
- Interpretive signs along trails are important (80.6%).
- There should be state tax incentives for citizens and utilities for trails acquisition (75.9%).
- Legislative action will assist in multi-use trail network development (68.3%).
- Trail development and renovation should comply with ADA accessibility standards (67.1%).

An idea that professionals strongly disagreed with is having a multi-use natural surface trail that could include off-road motorized vehicle use. Several respondents cited safety issues when discussing trails that allowed motorized vehicles and pedestrians, bicyclists or horseback riders. Even though providers have safety concerns about trails that allow motorized travel and non-motorized travel, providers are advocates of multi-use trails (i.e., for either motorized use or non-motorized use) citing health, economics and increased use as positive reasons for building trails.



Trail planning

As with any project, trail development can and should be an extensive project. Planners should consider many facets of trails prior to building. These considerations include community needs, ultimate usage, marketing, funding, design, materials and long-term maintenance. The majority of communities represented by survey respondents had neither ordinances nor regulations to facilitate trail development. Some communities did perform background research using the U.S. Census Bureau, public information sources, and/or in-house experts. Few respondents considered consulting health and wellness professionals when developing trails. That group may be an untapped resource for assistance with universal design or ADA compliance.

Funding

Funding is a major trail development and maintenance issue. Respondents did not believe adequate funding was available for increasing trail systems or for

trails maintenance, particularly in small communities. Respondents did say there should be more trails and that trails would benefit their community economically. They also said trails would be an excellent way to connect residential communities with business districts, but cited the need for improvements to essential facilities (such as water treatment plants), which took precedence over funding new trails. Another barrier trail providers reported was grants apply specifically to new land purchases rather than to developing currently owned land.

Conclusions

Trail professionals believe trails are a tremendous benefit for users and the community in terms of economics, education, health and well-being. They agree that interconnected trails and an extensive trails system is essential to Indiana and would increase trail use. Although trail planners already use many resources, it may benefit them to enlarge their local resource pool by surveying the community, conducting community forums and requesting the assistance of



professionals from tangential fields.

The Indiana trails vision is having a trail accessible within 15 minutes or 7.5 miles of every citizen by 2016 (The Indiana State Trails, Greenways, and Bikeways Plan, 2006). Achieving the goal may require trail providers to work much more closely with communities, organizations and citizens at the grassroots level when determining the most comprehensive and user-friendly trail system for that specific population. If end users have significant input and perceive that their needs are being met, they will be more likely to accept ownership of the project and be involved in fund raising, development and future trail maintenance. Trail providers may need to use effective marketing strategies to make full use of community resources and build community involvement. In the face of strict budgets and limited external funds, expending the time and effort (cost) needed to integrate local community into the planning, implementation and preservation of a desirable trail system may be well worth it.

Bringing it together

It is all about recreation, getting away from the pressures of life and taking a moment to relax, enjoy and absorb the outdoors. Even in this world of high technology and responsibility to employer and family, Hoosiers believe in enjoying the natural environment in Indiana. They enjoy walking her trails, boating in her waterways, taking in the sights and sounds of fairs and festivals, and socializing with friends and family. Activities such as hunting and fishing that have bonded several generations are still highly important in our culture. While new activities, such as Frisbee golf, ORV driving and flying remote control airplanes continue to emerge.

Users and providers agree that there are not enough locations or opportunities. Equally important, there is not

enough funding to adequately expand them. During this time when health and well-being are at the forefront of our nation's mind, outdoor recreation offers an astounding array of opportunities to help Hoosiers improve their lifestyles and meet the initiatives set forth by State and federal governments. The ability to enhance opportunities is nevertheless stymied. But Hoosiers need not be held back or denied their wishes. Park and recreation professionals are working to find non-traditional ways to meet these needs. They are finding new, innovative ways to get funds, and partnering more with local organizations for facilities. Providers are scrutinizing ways to use what they already have to connect to other facilities and add enough new features to meet community needs. Communities are responding with donations and volunteerism. Citizens and professionals want to see outdoor recreation flourish. They see the economic, health, social and personal benefits outdoor recreation can provide and they are willing to give for the greater gain.

But the work has only begun. Even more collaborative efforts need to be made. Effective marketing and public relations will be essential in the future. Involving community members in decision-making and allowing them to take some ownership of the improvements may be an option for increasing money through donations, bequests, volunteerism and awareness. Teamwork and open communication will be an essential element in the future of outdoor recreation. The team players will look beyond park and recreation professionals to include experts from tangential fields as well as the end users. As park and recreation specialists become more adept at working within their community, the use of outdoor recreation facilities will flourish, the needs of both ends of the spectrum will be met, and the win-win situation will be an example for years to come.